

Peters Mill (Bushkill Mill)  
Northwest corner of U.S.  
Rte. 209 and T301  
Bushkill, Lehman Township  
Pike County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-1137

HABS  
PA,  
52-BUSH,  
2-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HABS  
PA 62 -  
BUSH,  
2-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. PA-1137

PETERS MILL (Bushkill Mill)

Location:

Northwest corner of U.S. Rte. 209 and T301, just north of Bushkill Creek in Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, Bushkill, Lehman Township, Pike County, Pa.

USGS Bushkill Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 18.499720.4548770.

Present Owner:

United States Government.

Present Use:

Vacant. Proposed for demolition for the Tocks Island Dam Project. However, the subsequent cancellation of project has delayed demolition.

Significance:

Bushkill Grist Mill, located in the Delaware Water Gap region, is a good example of early grist mill technology as much of its original machinery is still intact. It is also notable for its long existence as a grist mill and its association with the Peters family, a prominent nineteenth-century family of Pike County.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Dates of erection: Probably built circa 1840. While architectural historians have placed the building circa 1790 because of construction techniques and building materials, historians have dated the building circa 1840 through primary resource identification.

The first mention of the mill is found in the 1841 assessment records at the Pike County Court House, Mildord, Pa. At this time, Henry Peters' property was reassessed, listing a grist mill on the property. Peter purchased the property in 1813, at which time, it contained a house and a sawmill but no grist mill. An 1857 deed, from the heirs of the late Henry Peters to close relatives, reaffirms the existence of the grist mill. It also notes the existence of the "tavern house" and saw mill on the property.

2. Architect: None known.
3. Original and subsequent owners:

1813 Deed: 11 September 1813  
Book 3, page 201

Recorded 22 Aug. 1818

John Heller of Delaware Township, Wayne County,  
"Innkeeper", and Susannah, ux.,

to  
Henry Peters, of Delaware Township, Wayne County,  
"Yeoman"

Considerations: \$4,400.

Acreage: 2 tracts (1) 23 acres, 3 perches (2) "about  
60 acres."

Grant: (1) "situate on the Big Bushkill Creek and  
including the house and Saw Mill now in the  
occupancy of the said John Heller" (2) "on the  
little Bushkill Creek.....now lived on by Negro  
Abraham Rufner [?]."

1857 Deed: 2 September 1857  
Book 23, page 207

Recorded 10 Sept. 1859

Sarah Peters, Elizabeth Peters, Maria C. Peters, Catherine  
Peters, Henry M. Labar and Elsie G. Labar, of Lehman  
Township, Pike County, and Henry S. and Delinda P. Mott of  
Milford, Pike County, (Heirs of Henry Peters, deceased, of  
Lehman Township),

to  
Charles R. Peters, Samuel G. Peters, and William N. Peters,  
of Lehman Township

Considerations: \$30,000.

Acreage: 4 tracts, total 247 1/2 acres.

Grant: on entire conveyance "there is erected a  
tavern house, grist mill, saw mill, and several  
other buildings"; the land of the late Henry  
Peters; primarily in Lehman Township, partly in  
Middle Smithfield Township.

Reference to four earlier deeds: (1) John Heller  
et ux. to Henry Peters, 11 Sept. 1813, (2) John  
Coolbaugh et ux., to Henry Peters, 23 March 1822,  
Book 5, page 498, (3) Frederick Vanakin et ux.,  
to Henry Peters, 23 June 1829, unlocated, (4)  
Daniel Schoonover et ux., to Henry Peters, 4 Jan.  
1834, Book 23, page 206.

1859 Deed: 7 April 1859  
Book 23, page 211

Recorded 10 Sept. 1859

William N. Peters of Smithfield Township,  
to

Charles R. Peters, and Samuel G. Peters of Lehman Township,  
Pike County

Consideration: \$6,666.66

Acreage: (one third part of two tracts) (1) 247 1/2  
acres.

Grant: share of land conveyed in 1857 Deed, including  
buildings and additional tract.

- 1889 Deed: 2 December 1889 Recorded 26 Dec. 1889  
Book 46, page 403  
Samuel D. Mott [son of Delinda Peters Mott] and Zaiddee L. Mott, of Passaic, Passaic County, New Jersey,  
to  
Samuel Peters, Edwin F. Peters, Harry Peters, and Van C. Peters, of Lehman Township  
Consideration: \$833.  
Grant: release of claim to land in Deed from Sarah Peters et al., to Charles R. Peters et al., 1857.
- 1890 Deed: 1 May 1890 Recorded 20 June 1890  
Book 46, page 622  
Maria S. Peters, Catherine M. Elinberger, William N. Peters and Lena N. Peters (ux.), of Lehman Township, and Charles P. and Jeanette Mott of Milford, Pennsylvania,  
to  
Samuel G. Peters, Edwin F. Peters, Harry Peters, Van C. Peters, of Lehman Township,  
Consideration: \$1.00.  
Grant: release of claim to land in Deed from Sarah Peters et al., to Charles R. Peters et al., 1857
- 1933 Deed: 3 October 1933  
Book 88, page 24  
Charles E. and Adelaide Roth, of Reading, Pennsylvania, and Knighton Peters, of Hancock, New York,  
to  
Charles E. Peters, of Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania  
Consideration: \$1.00.  
Grant: conveyance of all real estate in Lehman Township, acquired by the grantors either by inheritance through Van C. Peters, deceased, or as devised under the last will and testament of E. F. Peters, deceased.
- 1947 Deed: 21 November 1947 Recorded 24 Nov. 1947  
Book 108, page 212  
Charles E. Peters, and Mildred Peters, ux., of Stroudsburg,  
to  
Marcia DeRocco, ux. of Jovan DeRocco, of Bushkill, Pike County,
- 1951 Deed: 15 November 1951 Recorded 19 Nov. 1951  
Book 116, page 265  
Marcia DeRocco and Jovan DeRocco, of Bushkill,  
to  
Marcia DeRocco and Blanche Clapp, of Bushkill

1960 Deed: 1 March 1960 Recorded 5 March 1960  
Book 151, page 372  
Blanche E. Clapp of Lehman Township, Marcia and Jovan  
DeRocco, of Bushkill  
to  
Arthur E. and Mary H. Lyons, of Baltimore, Maryland  
Consideration: \$7,500.

4. Alterations: Nineteenth century alterations include the addition of clapboard over vertical siding and scalloped barge boards in the eaves. In 1960, the owner covered over the mill race with a wooden floor, closed the door of the south side of the cellar, and converted the window in the east end of the cellar into a door.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

Henry Peters (1786-1857) first purchased land at the site of the mill in 1813 from John Heller, "Innkeeper". For \$4,400, Henry Peters purchased 23 acres, 3 perches "on the Big Bushkill Creek... including the house and Saw mill..." and about 60 acres on the little Bushkill Creek.

By the time of his death, Henry Peters had accumulated four tracts of land totaling 247½ acres and to his heirs, he left a tavern house, grist mill, saw mill and several other buildings. While much of his land was in Bushkill, Lehman Township, Henry Peters also held land in Middle Smithfield Township.

The grist mill, presumably erected on the site of a fulling mill, remained in operation until 1928 or later and remained in the family until 1947.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old views:

Photograph of lower east elevation, circa 1905.

Photocopy of painting by Edwin D. Mott of east elevation of mill and covered bridge nearby, 1940.

Photocopy of drawing by Edwin D. Mott of an aerial view of the mill and surroundings, circa 1955.

2. Bibliography:

a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Deed Book, Pike County Court House Records, 1813-1960.

Assessment Records, Pike County Court House, 1841.

h. Secondary and published sources:

Henn, William F., The Story of the River Road. 1975

Mathews, Alfred, History of Wayne, Pke and Monroe Counties, Pennsylvania. Philadelphia, 1886

Prepared by Elizabeth D. Walters  
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Delaware Gap National  
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July-August 1970  
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Summer 1970

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The character of the mill represents early milling techniques and construction techniques in the Upper Delaware region. The mill contains much of its original machinery, including wooden shafts, cogs, gears, and millstones.
2. Condition of fabric: Good. Much of the original building material is extant; later alterations do not affect the character of the Building.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The mill is 30' (three-bay front) x 43'-6" (three-bays). The mill is two stories with a partially exposed foundation.
2. Foundations: Random rubble stone approximately 1'-6" in depth, laid with mud mortar. The foundation is fully exposed on the south side adjacent to the road.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: Clapboards installed with wire nails to older vertical boards, which in turn are nailed to the braced timber frame with machine cut nails. Evidence of red paint on the exterior clapboards, now unpainted.

4. Structural system, framing: Braced timber framing is exposed on the interior and is composed of solid mortise and tenon construction. Some of the large wall girts and secondary posts were hand hewn, while the rest of the frame, the floor joists, rafters and the stripping for roofing were sawn (vertical saw marks).
  5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: Both the front stair and porch were constructed of wood. Photograph and photocopy of painting reveal that the porch was originally let in the foundation and was free standing.
  6. Chimneys: None.
  7. Openings:
    - a. Doorways and doors: Entrance door: Dutch type, two vertical panels on each part. Second floor, four panel. Both doors are board and batten with applied one-half inch thick stiles and rails to simulate a paneled door. The west cellar door is rough board and batten. The north door on the main floor appears new.
    - b. Windows and shutters: Windows are six-over-six-light double-hung sash. The frames are of wood and painted white. In the south wall of the basement, a bank of five six-over-six-light double hung sash windows exists.
  8. Roof:
    - a. Shape, covering: The structure is capped by a slate covered gable roof with a central portion of the gable projecting over a hoist and loading door on the second floor, with the main entrance below. The ridge runs perpendicular to the east front.
    - b. Cornice, eaves: Scalloped barge board at eaves, front and sides (of 19th c. origin).
- C. Description of Interior:
1. Floor Plans:
    - a. Cellar: The ground floor was originally one large open space with the mill race cutting through the building and a mill turbine across the central portion of the room. Alterations (circa 1960) covered the mill race with a wooden floor.
    - b. First floor and second floor: Both are one large open space, broken by two rows of posts running the length of the building. Mill machinery is contained in the roof space.

2. Stairways: An enclosed open-tread stairway to second floor runs along the west wall. A Stairway to the basement from first floor was added to the center of the building circa 1960.
3. Flooring: Wide, random width boards were applied with machine cut nails.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Exposed construction.
5. Doorways and doors: Beading at trim of front door. Board and hatten door at bottom of enclosed stairway on main floor. North door on top floor has two one-inch holes near middle and circular score marks on back.
6. Decorative features and trim: Rows of posts on main floor are chamfered to form an octagonal section.
7. Hardware: Wrought nails and wrought strap and pintle hinges were used at entrance door and loading door above. Front entrance door and stairway door have wrought thumb latches with pieces missing.
8. Mechanical equipment: Two millstones are in place on the first floor. At the second floor one may see in the attic, a wooden drive shaft. An iron drive shaft ran vertically from the water turbine at the cellar to the attic drive shaft; most of the iron shaft is extant. At rear, a vertical conveyor belt ran between first and second floors. Front millstone lettered "P. Mellon, ston, 1842"; seen from cellar, on the bottom side. Wooden machinery has machine cut nails.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: Located north of and adjacent to Bushkill Creek, the main elevation faces east. The millpond is located northwest of the mill with the millrace entering below the building on the north side, at the center, and discharging on the south, passing under the road.
2. Historic landscape design: None.
3. Outbuildings: At north, a stone foundation exists of a building said by the present owner to have the miller's house. At west, there is a home which he believes was an ice house and behind that, is the site of a cider press.

Prepared by Robert C. Giebner  
Project Supervisor  
Historic American  
Buildings Survey  
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PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in cooperation with the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, supervised by the National Park Service and funded by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The project, which extended from 1967 to 1971, was under the general direction of James C. Massey, Chief of HABS. This structure was measured and drawn in the summer of 1967 under the direction of Robert C. Giebner (University of Arizona), Project Supervisor, by student assistant architects David L. Bouse (University of Nebraska), William L. McQueen (University of Illinois), and Dennis E. Walo (Texas A & M University) in the HABS field office at Columbia, New Jersey in the project area of the Tocks Island Reservoir and the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. The historical data was written by Elizabeth D. Walters, Historian with the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and project historian, in 1970. The written data was edited for transmittal to the Library of Congress in the summer of 1980 by Kent R. Newell of the HABS staff. The photographs were taken by George Eisenman in 1967.